

DEVELOPMENT OF FISHING ALTERNATIVES: NEXT STEPS

August 2003-February 2004

The NMSP has been working with Sustainable Resources Group International, Inc, the RAC and key agency partners (NOAA's Fisheries Service, the State of Hawaii, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Coast Guard, Department of Defense) and others through an interagency group and one-on-one meetings to identify ways to address fishing in a proposed sanctuary.

In addition to these efforts, the NMSP contracted with SRG to conduct a series of approximately 20 discussion group sessions with individual members of the RAC, stakeholders, technical experts and agency representatives that began in August and ended in November 2003. The sessions dealt with the key fisheries issues including: crustaceans, precious coral, bottom fish, recreational/pelagic, subsistence, and marine zoning. The SRG report on the work is being made final in early February. The report will provide a basic characterization of the fisheries and their impacts. The report will also provide a preliminary assessment of the compatibility of the fisheries with the purposes of NMSA and the current draft goals and objectives for the proposed sanctuary.

February-August 2004

During February and March the report and the discussion group results will be used by the NMSP in consultation with the RAC and agency partners to develop a range of alternatives to address fishing in the proposed sanctuary. This will be followed by a detailed economic and environmental analysis and comparison of the alternatives. The analysis will be provided to the RAC in late May to provide the basis for their deliberation and recommendation to the NMSP on a preferred alternative for fishing.

In August the NMSP plans to provide WPRFMC with a formal request to draft fishing regulations for the proposed sanctuary. Section 304 (a) (5) of the NMSA requires the NMSP to provide WPRFMC with an opportunity to draft fishing regulations for the proposed sanctuary consistent with guidance from the NMSP, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The NMSP regulations provide WPRFMC with 120 days to complete the action.